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TAGS: [PREL](#) [CH](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: Xiamen Researchers Say Little Change in Taiwan  
Cross-strait Policy Regardless of Winner

Classified by Robert Goldberg, Consul General, Guangzhou,  
Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

REFERENCE: Shanghai 195

¶1. (C) Summary and comment: Scholars at Xiamen University's Taiwan Research Institute told the Ambassador April 17 that they believed there would be little change in Taiwan's policy toward the mainland regardless which party wins the presidential campaign. In their view, it would be neither as good with the Kuomintang nor as bad as with the Democratic Progressive Party as some people were predicting. The scholars questioned why the USG did not take stronger action to curb independence moves by Chen Shui-bian. The TRI scholars appeared quite sophisticated in their understanding of Taiwan's domestic political scene and about issues of importance in the upcoming elections, but for obvious reasons continue to hew to Beijing's standard line on how United States arms sales and ?failure? to publicly chastise Chen contributes to ? and supports ? Chen's independence objectives. Walking out after the meeting, in response to the Ambassador's question, Dr. Liu Guoshen alleged that he was well-acquainted with both Chen Shui-bian and Frank Hsieh. End Summary and comment.

¶2. (C) During an April 17 meeting with Ambassador Randt and the Consul General, scholars of the Taiwan Research Institute (TRI) of Xiamen University (Dr. Liu Guoshen, President of the Institute; Professor Deng Tongchao, Vice President; Deng Lijuan, Vice President; Li Peng, Assistant President; Li Fei, Director of Economic Research Section; Zhang Wensheng, Director of Political Research Section; and Professor Lin Jin) shared insights about the current political situation and upcoming elections in Taiwan. Beijing did not have a specific preference among the Presidential candidates, KMT or DPP, though there was a possibility for somewhat more rapid (albeit limited) improvement in cross-Straits relations with a KMT victory. All agreed that it would take a long time to resolve current differences.

Evaluating Candidates in the KMT and DPP  
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¶3. (C) Ma Ying-jeou was the obvious choice for the KMT, while the DPP contest had likely now come down to Frank

Hsieh and Su Tseng-chang. The scholars were split on which DPP leader had the inside track, though some thought Su's control of significant administrative resources, as premier, gave him the inside track. (Note: Hsieh was subsequently selected as the DPP's candidate. End note) They characterized Su and Hsieh as practical and in favor of non-political cross-strait exchanges, but noted that neither is likely to depart from the DPP's fundamental doctrine of "independence." All of the DPP candidates, in their view, had chosen a "deep green" stance for their campaign; they were trying to "out green" one another. However, the realities one confronted in actually governing after election -- whether KMT or DPP -- meant that pre-election promises would be honored only insofar as they had practical applications.

#### Concerns about an Amended ROC Constitution

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¶4. (C) According to Liu Guoshen, Taiwan watchers in Xiamen are most concerned about an amended "Republic of China" constitution. The draft did address practical matters, such as how Taiwan moved forward in terms of democratic and economic development, but it also had an "irrational" component, i.e., the call for independence. TRI scholars said this latter aspect was in line with former ROC President Lee Tung-hui's "two country theory." Liu Guoshen said the Xiamen scholars were acquainted with the Taiwan professor responsible for drafting the new constitution, and they did not believe the new draft reflected the professor's real thinking.

¶5. (C) Liu went out of his way to compliment Taiwan's democratic development and suggested it could be a model for the mainland. He said that he could not imagine mainland authorities going after the family of senior government leaders as Taiwan courts had done in dealing

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with corrupt practices by Chen Shuibian's family.

#### Unexpected Cross-Strait Crises and USG "inaction"

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¶6. (C) The scholars expressed concern that Chen Shui-bian might seek to move forward with his independence agenda and thereby precipitate a cross-strait crisis (see reftel for a similar view from Fuzhou). They hoped the United States Government would send a strong public message to forestall any such move and to warn DPP candidates in particular from using the "independence" card as part of their election campaigns. They wondered as well why the United States had not been more forceful in addressing Chen's "four wants and one no" statement, likening our response to "giving loud thunder sound but dropping little rain," i.e., all gesture and no substantial action. Similarly, they viewed United States arms sales as only encouraging separatists.

¶7. (C) The Ambassador stated that the United States had directly and forcefully responded to its serious concerns raised by Chen Shui-bian's "Four Wants" message. The President had been very clear and consistent about administration views on cross-strait matters and the need for a peaceful resolution of all outstanding matters. The Ambassador also pointed out our obligation under the Taiwan Relations Act to ensure that Taiwan had the wherewithal to defend itself, and that this was today even more important in view of China's aggressive non-transparent military buildup. We well understood, he said, the issues at stake here and supported policies and actions that reduced tensions and are in the interests of the people on both sides of the Strait. Dr. Liu alleged that he was well-acquainted with both Chen Shui-bian and Frank Hsieh, whom he said he had recently met.

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